

ARABIAN PENINSULA

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The Gulf war revealed "the corruption, the military weakness, the lack of national unity and loyalty" that characterise the political and social life in Saudi Arabia, he said.

It also emphasised Saudi Arabia's total dependence on the United States, said Mr. al-Mubarak, who attended a recent Jordanian Communist Party conference.

The Gulf war has increased the awareness of the Saudi people and the percentage of Saudis who are demanding democracy, according to Mr. al-Mubarak.

Democracy, Mr. al-Mubarak said, has widespread support in Saudi Arabia, even among members of the royal family, but it is finding resistance from King Fahd's branch of the ruling family.

Asked whether a meeting was held between Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz and the SCP, Mr. al-Mubarak said no official meeting was held, but that Prince 'Abdallah met with certain individuals accused of being members of the SCP. He added that the crown prince is popular in the country and a known supporter of democracy.

He emphasised that "if democracy is not instituted in Saudi Arabia, violence will spread throughout the country due to tribalism, factionalism and regionalism."

"Saudi Arabia has no freedoms, no constitution and no unions. It pays no attention to human rights agreements," Mr. al-Mubarak asserted.

The absence of democracy, he added, has brought together opposition parties and forces in Saudi Arabia and increased the public's support for them. The SCP has managed to cooperate with the Democratic National Alliance and the Shi'ite reformist movement, he said.

"The SCP cannot be ignored as an important political force in the country. Even the government looks for our literature and our analysis of events," he claimed. Support for the party, Mr. al-Mubarak added, is found throughout Saudi Arabia, but is mainly located in the south, where a large labour population lives. He refused to disclose any numbers or percentages of the party's strength, explaining that it is an underground party and thus it is impossible to know numbers.

Mr. al-Mubarak is anticipating a change in the name and the platform of the party at the SCP's next conference. He refused to divulge any information about the time and place of the meeting.

He said the SCP, which dates back to the 1950s, changed its name to the Saudi Communist Party in its first conference in 1975. Now, Mr. al-Mubarak said, the SCP is discussing these changes in order to focus on the priorities of the current era and to become a mass political party.

He said the SCP is socialist in its principles. But, he said, "in this period, it believes it should focus on democracy,

human rights, social development, political and economic independence, perceiving that socialism is something that may materialise in the very distant future."

Deputy Minister on Combating Terrorism

PM2304130593 London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic
23 Apr 93 pp 25, 26

[Interview with Saudi Deputy Interior Minister Prince Ahmad Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz by unidentified correspondent in Riyadh; date not given]

[Excerpts] [AL-HAWADITH] Four non-Saudis were among the seven people executed recently in the kingdom. Is crime widespread among foreign workers?

[Prince Ahmad] It is natural for a number of professional criminals to slip in among visiting workers to commit their crimes in peaceful areas of the kingdom. We confront this to guarantee the safety of the kingdom's people and those residing in it. There are punishments and disciplinary actions. We do not implement these sentences during the blessed month of Ramadan; we implement them before or after it. This is why they sometimes pile up and are implemented at once. Like the crime of murder, death is the punishment for drug trafficking and drug smuggling. It is a natural thing when there are thousands of visiting workers.

[AL-HAWADITH] Is there a great deal of smuggling in the kingdom?

[Prince Ahmad] Smuggling is rife in the world and occurs everywhere. The process of combating drugs and drug smuggling is successful here and achieves most of the objectives required of it. The smuggling rate here is much less than in any other country.

[AL-HAWADITH] Were there sabotage actions in the kingdom which were not announced?

[Prince Ahmad] There is absolutely nothing of that kind. And all that was said in this connection was merely a lie.

[AL-HAWADITH] Are there in jail people who are detained because of their ideological and political opinions?

[Prince Ahmad] There are no prisoners held because of their ideological opinions or beliefs; rather, they are there for criminal reasons. Some of these use political motives as a pretext to cover criminal motives for their base actions. You heard about the bombing incident and the incident which occurred in the holy mosque in Mecca. The two incidents had nothing to do with politics. They are purely criminal acts whose perpetrators failed to ideologize them. They were condemned by all people. There are those who forge passports and documents, and their crime is an ordinary crime and purely criminal. So how can anyone claim that this has a political or ideological background?

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ARABIAN PENINSULA

35

[AL-HAWADITH] What about demonstrations, the distribution of cassettes, and the delivery of inflammatory and harmful speeches?

[Prince Ahmad] There are no demonstrations or actions opposed to the authorities. As for the speeches, they are not aimed at causing harm, but at expressing sound opinions about matters being raised like the Bosnia-Herzegovina issue and so on.

[AL-HAWADITH] Are there Islamic extremists in Saudi Arabia?

[Prince Ahmad] That phenomenon exists in every state, but extremism does not express itself in the kingdom in a way violating the law. Anything said contrary to this is untrue. [passage omitted]

[AL-HAWADITH] Do you contribute to combating terrorism in its new and dangerous sense?

[Prince Ahmad] Like any world state, we in the kingdom condemn all forms of terrorism, especially when its victims are among the innocent. Whatever the excuses of those who commit it, terrorism is terrorism and the number of its victims among the innocent is much greater than those targeted.

As for those who defend their homelands and usurped territories, their actions do not come into the category of terrorism. These are mujahidin and fighters. Terrorism is what goes beyond struggle against oppression and aggression.

[AL-HAWADITH] And do you cooperate with Interpol in this connection?

[Prince Ahmad] Yes, and with Arab security organs—that is, daily and continuously. [passage omitted]

United Arab Emirates

Sultan Qabus of Oman Arrives, Meets Shaykh Zayid

JN2604134993 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1250 GMT
26 Apr 93

[Text] Al-'Ayn, 26 Apr (WAKH)—His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, president of the United Arab Emirates [UAE], held a closed session of talks with His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id of Oman here today.

The Omani News Agency [ONA] has said that the two leaders reviewed current Gulf and Arab issues and matters of mutual interest. They also discussed bilateral relations and ways of promoting them in various fields, ONA added.

Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id arrived in the city of al-'Ayn earlier today on a visit to the UAE.

Sultan Qabus Departs

JN2604182293 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1430 GMT
26 Apr 93

[Excerpt] Al-'Ayn, 26 Apr (WAKH)—His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id of Oman left al-'Ayn today after a short visit to the United Arab Emirates [UAE]. His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, UAE president, led those who saw off his majesty. [passage omitted]

Yemen

Preparations for First All-Yemen Election Reported

PM2304132793 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 22 Apr 93 p 5

[Hammud Munsir and Lutfi Shatarah report: "Al-Ahmar Denies Concluding 'Secret Agreements' with Other Organizations"]

[Excerpts] Sanaa, Aden—While the tendency is to allow candidates more time to withdraw their nominations in order to give other candidates a chance at the wish of the two ruling parties, the Socialist Party and the [General] People's Congress, and make the final preparations for the general election to elect the first unified Yemeni parliament, Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Husayn al-Ahmad, chief of the Hashid tribes and leader of the Yemeni Reform Grouping party, the two ruling parties' strong rival, has denied the existence of secret agreements between his party and any other political organization, including the two ruling parties.

Shaykh al-Ahmar said that his party's policy is clear and does not believe in secrecy, that the People's Congress and the Socialist Party are partners in power, and that he does not know what they are hatching between themselves for the future.

Al-Ahmar renewed the Yemeni Reform Grouping party's willingness to participate after the election in any coalition to form a government. He said: "That is our policy and conviction. Because Yemen needs all efforts to be pooled and all forces to shoulder their responsibility in this connection." [passage omitted]

Meanwhile the "national committee for free elections," an independent committee, has denounced the higher election committee's decision to prevent it from observing the election and to allow only international observers to do so. These observers include representatives from the U.S. Republican Institute, the U.S. Democratic Institute, and the European Parliament, in addition to representatives of the candidates themselves.

The committee has threatened to draw up an alternative plan to observe the election and guarantee its impartiality. It will request all the volunteers working within its framework to follow it on polling day, that is 27 April.